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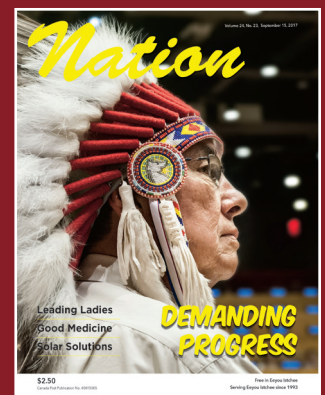


Photo provided by
United Nations

Strength, pride and indignation

by Dan Isaac



I was born to a strong, proud, indignant Indigenous woman. She came from a long line of strong, proud, indignant Indigenous women. They spent their whole lives fighting to ensure we, as Indigenous people, inherited a kinder, gentler world. They had powerful voices and principles. These are my foremothers and I like to think they succeeded in their fight.

Because of their work I'm allowed to dream in ways that my grandparents, great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents never could. But I also understand that as a man walking through this world, my dreams are more accessible.

I've never fielded questions at job interviews about whether or not I intended to have children in the near future. I've never walked an empty street at night with house keys clenched in my hand like brass knuckles. I've been welcomed with open arms to the boys-clubs that exist in every institution and workplace. I've been compensated for

my time to the same tune as my male colleagues and was never expected to prove myself because of an extra X chromosome.

I recently found out that I'm going to be the father of an Indigenous girl. The prevailing thought in my head since receiving this news is that my one-and-only mission in this world is to protect her as she grows into a woman. But I cannot protect my daughter from everything. There will be times that I know I will fail in this mission.

When I was 10, the mother of a non-Indigenous friend told me, "Don't worry, you're not like the rest of them." An early mentor asked me if I was one of those "city Indians?" I've lived an easier life than my ancestors, but have still been targeted, ridiculed and rejected because I'm the son of a strong, proud, indignant Indigenous woman.

I can't insulate my daughter from the casual, institutionalized and entrenched racism that she'll face because I'm her

father. I can't hold her hand through most of these experiences. I can, however, give her tools to meet these challenges.

To do that, I have to become stronger. We all do. I have to learn to meet these challenges in a way that would make my ancestors proud.

There are times that we act as if we're not a proud people. I've done it. I've been polite when I should have been indignant. I've hidden in plain sight. But I realize that the time for politeness is over. This is our land, not because we own it but because we come from it. It's not ownership that guides us but responsibility. And it is time that the people we share it with realize that too.

As Indigenous people, we have to be strong, proud and indignant to ensure our children don't have to face all the things we've faced, and that starts with our voice. This is what my mother taught me.



Breakup

Trudeau announces **Indigenous Affairs shake-up** to mixed reviews

by Dan Isaac | Photo by Ben Powless

In an unexpected move, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced August 28 that Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is being divided into two sections by self-governing and non-self-governing First Nations Communities, effectively replacing the current model.

Former health minister Jane Philpott will head the non-self governing department, now called Indigenous Services, while Carolyn Bennett's title has shifted to minister of Crown-Indigenous relations and Northern Affairs, and will continue her relationship with the Crees of Eeyou Istchee.

At the press conference announcing the shuffle outside Rideau Hall, Trudeau said he was, "very excited about this meaningful next step [towards reconciliation]." A press release that followed outlined "existing colonial structures" as a hindrance to achieving election promises to Indigenous peoples made by the Trudeau Liberals.

Media outlets were also quick to hail the decision as something that could transform Canada's relationship with First Nations—the Indigenous community, however, was divided.

National chief Perry Bellegarde called the move, "a positive step for First Nations' relationships with the Crown," in a tweet following the

announcement. But a backlash of criticism followed as well.

"Certainly, one Indian Affairs is bad enough," said Indigenous activist and lawyer Pam Palmater in an interview with Canada Talks. "The thought of two is an absolute nightmare... as if the needs of First Nations could be split so neatly between right to consultation and social programs."

Executive Director of the Grand Council of the Crees, Bill Namagoose was less severe in his criticism. "Anytime you divide a ministry, you're duplicating some levels of bureaucracy," he said.

"You need something more comprehensive," said Namagoose. "Cindy Blackstock is talking about a cost estimate of what it would take to bring First Nations people up to par with the rest of Canada. From there you create a plan and a budget. That's how you bring people out of poverty. Doing legalistic and symbolic things won't get you there and that's what the Crees have proven."

Namagoose believes real change will only begin to happen when the government prioritizes a concrete plan over the renaming of buildings. "It's very symbolic. The biggest issue facing Indigenous people is living conditions. Dividing the department doesn't

address that," Namagoose told *the Nation*.

And while Namagoose agreed that the goal for First Nations should be self-governance, he also cautioned that some aren't there yet. "Nations like the Mohawk and Eeyou Cree don't need any help," said Namagoose. "But you cannot be self governing if you don't have the financial resources to sustain a community."

"A lot of First Nations groups talk about symbols too," said Namagoose. "They talk about their sovereignty and won't get into incremental, concrete negotiations like the Cree. It's all or nothing for them."

"The Crees have sovereignty, but that's not our end goal. The most important issue is our people and the viability of our communities," he implored. "There can be many nations in a country. There are only 200 countries in the world but there's 5000 nations."

According to INAC there are over 630 First Nations communities in Canada representing more than 50 Nations. As of 2017, Canada has signed 27 self-government agreements covering 67 Indigenous communities (62 First Nations, five Inuit)—the nine Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee are included in that total.

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John Farrington 1943-2017

It was with sadness that we learned of John's passing. Our condolences go out to his family. John was part of the Air Creebec family for many years working tirelessly to make Air Creebec's inflight magazine one that many Crees enjoyed. He was a masterful storyteller whose passion for the Cree of Eeyou Istchee could be seen and experienced through his stories and photos. John made many friends due to his generosity, sense of humour, kindness and willingness to share a smile with all who met him.

Our deepest sympathies to his friends and family in this time of grief.

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Rezolution director honoured

Catherine Bainbridge of Rezolution Pictures was honoured at the fifth edition of the Birks Diamond Tribute to the Year's Women in Film. A private event for the 12 Canadian women took place on September 12 at The Spoke Club in Toronto during the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

The jury said Bainbridge has brought her signature passion for storytelling to countless documentary, drama, comedy and interactive media projects, notably the Peabody Award-winning documentary, Reel Injun, about Native stereotypes in Hollywood films. Her role as director on Rumble encapsulates her love and devotion to music, history, politics and bringing important Indigenous stories to the mainstream.

"It took a village to make Rumble – four years and lots of people," Bainbridge said. "We are really proud of it! Everyone at Rezolution was involved in getting it made – and now the world can know that there is a missing chapter in the story of American music, which is the Indigenous influence. We know about the African-American influence and the European influence but there is a profound and deep Indigenous influence on American blues, jazz and rock."

The film includes appearances by Iggy Pop, Slash, Robbie Robertson, Steven Tyler, Dan Auerbach, Robert Trujillo, Martin Scorsese and many more.

"This movie is about the soundtrack of our lives and realizing – for the first time for many of us – that there is a profound Indigenous influence on all of American music."



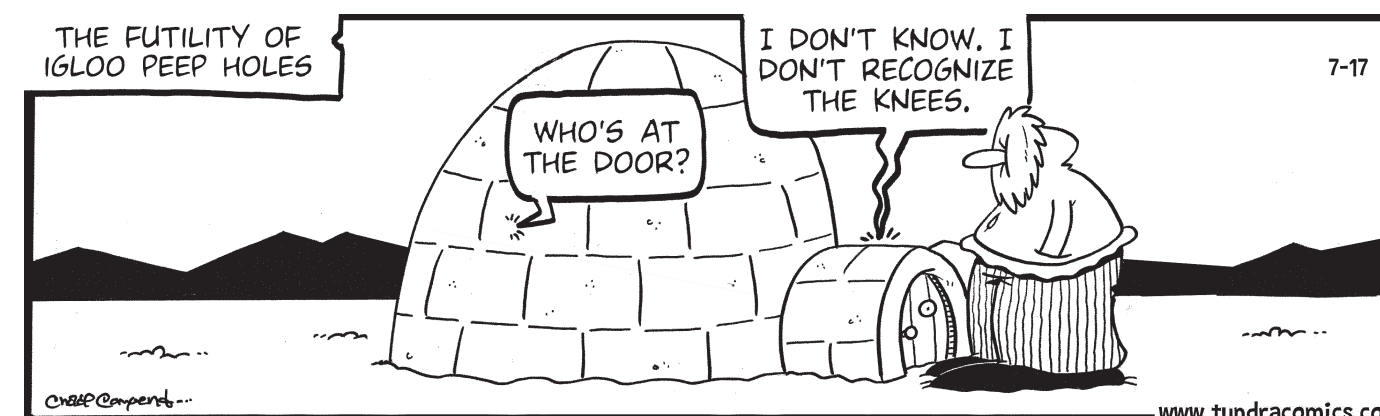
CTA office closed

The Mistissini Cree Trappers Association office is closing its regional office. Despite misunderstandings on Facebook, the local CTA office will remain open.

Clark Shecapio at the Waskaganish CTA office explained

that the closing of the regional office will not affect services at the local CTA office. "We felt there wasn't a need to have two CTA regional offices," said Shecapio.

Mistissini CTA members will not be affected by the change.



7-17

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Apologies

The Nation apologizes to Catherine Quinn. In our last issue of the Nation (Vol. 24, No. 22), the feature Under The Big Tent (page 10) erroneously credited Catherine Orr as one of the photographers when in fact some of the photos were taken by Catherine Quinn. Catherine Orr did not supply photos for that feature. We thank Catherine Quinn for her amazing photos.

From Tradition to Science

Traditional medicines and diabetes: An ancient treatment for a modern disease

by Ben Powless | Photos provided by Pierre Haddad

Elder Minnie Awashish never imagined that she would have a key medication compound for diabetes treatment named for her.

After nearly 15 years of working with scientists from universities in southern Quebec and Ontario, the Mistissini Elder was surprised to learn that scientists had named a chemical compound, Awashishinic Acid, after her and her late husband, Sam Awashish.

It was in honour of their work on a project to determine what traditional plant medicines could be effective to treat diabetes.

That story began nearly 20 years ago, with a flight to Morocco in 1998.

Pierre Haddad got off the plane to attend a conference on medicines and plants. Haddad, born in Egypt but who moved to Canada at the age of four, was a professor at the Université de Montréal. He had been studying medicine, especially for diabetes, and came across a session on traditional medicine that fascinated him.

Haddad was then restructuring his work around diabetes, and decided he wanted to focus on looking at diabetes and the impact of traditional plant medicine.

They formed a team. They brought together a botanist and a phytochemist – someone who specializes in plant chemistry – and consulted with a member of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services committee.

It came at a fortuitous time for the Cree communities. In 1999, Mistissini Elders had spoken of the need to preserve and promote tra-

ditional medicines at a local annual general assembly.

Minnie Awashish says it's crucial to continue to pass along this knowledge to the youth. Even though she can no longer make the medicine herself, she's taught her daughter, Francis Awashish, how to prepare these traditional remedies.

"It's very important to continue with the medicines, to practice it," Minnie Awashish emphasized. "I encourage people to practice more using the medicines. There are a lot of Elders who have the knowledge, and to the youth, I encourage them to ask your Elders questions about the traditional medicine."

Haddad's team organized a number of meetings, at first with Elders, then with band councils. More and more people came on board, swelling to dozens of representatives of scientists, local Elders, chiefs and councils, and local health authorities. By 2002, they were ready to begin the work and obtained funding to proceed.

There were several questions to address.

Diabetes had been relatively unknown before the 1970s, maybe 1980s, in northern Quebec. Some felt that there was likely something about the traditional diet that prevented it.

Talking to over 150 Elders in six communities, they managed to narrow down 17 plants that were repeatedly mentioned as dealing with the symptoms of diabetes. Would any of them prove promising to either preventing type 2 diabetes (previously called adult-onset diabe-

tes) in the first place, or treating its symptoms?

The project had more than just one goal. Beyond identifying traditional ways of treating a modern disease, these scientists also wanted to see traditional knowledge taken more seriously by academics, by doctors and nurses, and by the public health administrators who decide on policies at a higher level.

It was essentially an effort of translation and verification. Translating – often literally, from Cree to English – the traditional knowledge that many Elders had into words that other academics anywhere in the world could understand.

The verification would take longer.

When asked, Haddad laughed at the comparisons with the science in fictional TV shows like CSI.

There, a forensic scientist inserts a vial in a machine. Whizz. Bang. Beep. Methyl-mercury was the murder weapon. Easy.

In real life, an undertaking like this wouldn't be over in seconds, or minutes. It would take years. Twelve, to be exact.

Starting in 2003, Alain Cuerrier, a botanist with the Université de Montréal and the Montreal Botanical Garden, began his journeys to Eeyou Istchee along with his students. Haddad recounts that Cuerrier was instantly liked by many of the Elders for the simple reason that he knew his plants.

Later they would trek into the bush, accompanied by Elders, searching out the candidate plants that had been identified as traditional remedies. This happened multiple times

It was essentially an effort of **translation and verification.**

Translating – often literally, from Cree to English – the traditional knowledge that many Elders had

over the years as they talked to more and more Elders.

After obtaining plant samples, they would return south, where the phytochemist would clean, dry and isolate the parts of the plants that Elders said were useful.

This was a trial-and-error process, one informed by feedback from community members, who might suggest that a certain plant or tree bark had to be boiled for a certain amount of time. Other potential medicinal compounds were extracted with alcohol, similar to

the herbal tinctures available in stores, explained Haddad.

These extractions needed to be tested, first in petri dishes – cultures of live cells. There, they could study what the compounds did to the cells, and eliminate those that were toxic to living cells.

Eventually, this narrowed the process down to 10 plants and trees.

The testing was rigorous. They tested different compounds found in each plant again and again, trying slightly different compounds. It took six months

to isolate just one compound that could prove most likely to work.

Once they had these plant compounds isolated, they began testing them, along with the whole plant preparation, on live mice.

“When we told the Elders we were going to use mice, they were happy because they said mice are man’s helpers,” Haddad added.

Mice share a lot of genetic makeup with humans, and allowed scientists to see how those that are both pre-dia-

betic and diabetic react to the different traditional medicines.

Each mouse had to be raised for between two to four months before testing different potential medicines and recording the impacts. Up to 78 animals were used in a single test – with examinations of up to 20 animal part samples – for a total of nearly 1,600 tests with just one plant compound.

After the animals were anesthetized, Haddad and his students removed their body tissues and organs to determine if the results were successful or not.

In the end, they determined just what effect these 10 plants had. Many were very common species: balsam fir (innasht), Labrador tea (kachichpukw), mountain cranberry (wishichimna), and tamarack (watnagan), which had the new chemical that was named after Elder Minnie Awashish and her family.

The results showed that many traditional medicines have the power to prevent diabetes, treat symptoms, or sometimes both. Some had effects similar to existing drugs, which meant they could be used to limit the prescription



of expensive pharmaceutical drugs. But they needed to be used with caution and under a doctor’s guidance.

Haddad is hopeful this research will help raise the credibility of traditional medicines in the medical establishment. He noted that it’s already helped traditional knowledge practitioners be more confident in their own knowledge.

However, Haddad is disappointed that his research findings didn’t make the impact he had hoped for. “We did our research, our reports and our summaries, but it didn’t quite reach

the desks of doctors and other health professionals,” he said.

This is the next challenge – advancing traditional medicine within the strict constraints of the current health system – one that Haddad and other health professionals are already working on.

They’ve begun a project to bring together community members, Elders, health professionals and health administrators to identify the barriers to using traditional medicine. When it’s done, sometimes this year, they intend to host workshops in different communi-

ties to present their findings. They will discuss short, medium and long-term action plans to improving traditional medicine access.

For diabetes prevention, they’ve also put together a team of researchers and health professionals to look at creating programs focusing on physical activity and healthy eating, which will also encourage medicinal plants as part of a healthy diet. The goal is to identify the impacts that lifestyle changes and traditional medicines can have in improving blood sugar, by involving

both pre-diabetics and people who already have diabetes.

Haddad acknowledges that none of these projects could have started in the first place if they didn’t work hard to develop good relationships.

“My colleagues who had experience working with communities said, ‘You’re crazy, this will never work!’ But we trusted the process, had like-minded people, and had some bumps along the way. There were some tensions, some mistakes along the way, but we built a great relationship,” Haddad noted.

Elder Awashish agrees. “Some people were afraid at first. But then they were willing to work with the scientists. They accepted them. Working with [community members] they learned other things, so they were both learning from each other.”

To this day, there are a number of people who began taking the traditional medicines that the Awashishes began to make during this study, which they continue to do. Passing on traditional knowledge is paramount, she says, and not only for the Cree.

“My colleagues who had experience working with communities said, ‘You’re crazy, this will never work!’”

– Pierre Haddad

The Elders discussed the Cree way of life, and how to keep our culture and our language alive. Some of the youth have lost our language, and the Elders want us to keep it alive

- Douglas Ottereyes

PRESERVING THE KNOWLEDGE

The 7th Annual **Nishiiyuu Council of Elders**
Gathering brings cultural support to communities

by Julie McIntosh | Photos by Gaston Cooper





This year's turnout saw a spike in attendance. Event coordinator Stella Masty Bearskin estimates that about 200 people turned up, compared to the 42 who attended the first cultural gathering seven years ago.



“Sometimes I forget who I am,” said Douglas Ottereyes after the annual Nishiiyuu Council of Elders Gathering held in Eastmain August 22-25.

“The gathering taught me how to keep our tradition alive, our culture and our language. It taught me how to look at the Cree way-of-life.”

The four-day cultural gathering offered discussions on such topics of cultural preservation and the promotion of Cree language in Eeyou Istchee. It gave Ottereyes, the Cree Nation Youth Council representative and vice-chair of the Waswanipi Youth Council, a better understanding about the Cree way of life.

This year's turnout saw a spike in attendance. Event coordinator Stella Masty Bearskin estimates that about 200 people turned up, compared to the 42 who attended the first cultural gathering seven years ago.

“It's getting more popular, and attracting enthusiastic crowds,” said executive director Janie Pachano.

“It's getting more popular, and attracting enthusiastic crowds”

- Executive director Janie Pachano

Numerous workshops featured beading, carving, storytelling, hide preparation and traditional medicine teachings, among others. Evening activities included sweats, cedar baths, and pipe and sacred fire ceremonies – all of which were conducted in Cree.

The gathering was held over four days to honour the four seasons and directions in Cree teachings. The Cree Nation Youth Council directed events on the

Public Notice

Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON FORESTRY ACTIVITIES

The Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP) invites the general public to express its opinion of logging and other modified activities in the 2017-2018 integrated operational forest management plans for Northern Québec. The consultation will take place from September 11 to October 6, 2017.

A variety of work will be carried out in the forest in the coming years. The integrated forest management plans present the sectors in which logging, land preparation, reforestation, slashing and other activities may take place. In addition, roads and other infrastructures will have to be built or improved in order to provide access to these potential sites. They, too, will be subject to consultation. The MFFP’s professionals would like to hear any concerns that forest users may have about the proposed forestry activities.

You are therefore invited to come and meet with the MFFP’s professionals and talk to them about your questions or concerns, at one of the following information sessions:

SCHEDULE OF CONSULTATION MEETINGS		
MANAGEMENT UNITS	DATE and TIME	PLACE
• 2662, 2664	September 20, 2017 from midday to 1 p.m.	Chibougamau: Town Hall Room (650, 3 ^e Rue).
• 8764	September 19, 2017 from midday to 1 p.m.	Lebel-sur-Quévillon: Room 2, Town Hall (500, Place Quévillon).

You may consult the operational plans throughout the consultation period and submit comments via our website at <http://www.mffp.gouv.qc.ca/forets/consultation-amenagement.jsp> or in person at the MFFP’s offices during regular hours. We will be able to answer your questions and listen to your concerns about the potential sites.

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IMPORTANT: If you would like to be told about future public consultations organized by the MFFP in Northern Québec, please write to christine.morin@mffp.gouv.qc.ca, and enter Request for inclusion on the mailing list in your e-mail header.



I was really
happy with the
community.

- Event coordinator
Stella Masty Bearskin

first day with youth cultural demonstrations and focus groups.

The second day gave way to teachings from Cree women in communities. Pachano holds the women’s gathering in high regard, noting that only in recent years have Cree women been invit-

ed to the discussion table. “We weren’t allowed to attend meetings or take part in political decisions when things were decided for the community. The first meeting I remember was the hydroelectric project in 1970s.”

On the third day, cultural coordinators were invited to present activities from their communities in honour of learning and sharing knowledge. And on the final day, Elders spoke about the importance of preserving Cree culture and language. They discussed the shadow

that alcohol and addiction casts over their communities.

“The Elders discussed the Cree way of life, and how to keep our culture and our language alive. Some of the youth have lost our language, and the Elders want

us to keep it alive,” said Ottereyes.

With regards to addiction, said Ottereyes, “The Elders talked about how to stop it by being the example, and showing our youth how to change and not to follow.”



The 8th
annual
Nichiiyuu
Council of
Elders Meeting
will be held in
Waswanipi, QC

For Pachano each one of the activities that took place during the gathering was important. “For me, every one is significant because it is our culture.”

Members of the Eastmain community opened their doors to accommodate the gathering’s higher demands. This included communi-

ty members cooking meals from their homes and volunteering their time.

Bearskin was overjoyed about Eastmain’s involvement, calling it friendly and dynamic. “I was really happy with the community.”

She said about 60 to 70 people volunteered during the gathering. The youth

were more than willing to help. “You could see the motivation and the respect they had for the gathering. It showed their work ethic,” said Bearskin.

Eastmain’s Cree Nation Office adopted a policy stating that staff members who wanted to help could count

their hours towards their worksheet.

In return, Elders supported the Eastmain community by helping them heal from the recent overdose incidents in the region. Part of the gathering’s objective is to lend its support to the host community.

Bearskin noticed how the Elders’ presence helped the community come together. “[People] said they really appreciated it because it’s something that helped them heal and recover.”

Next year’s gathering will be held in Waswanipi.

Ladies in Leadership

By Amy German

Even as they are traditional wardens of the land and mothers to its children, women in Cree politics balance the responsibility of representing the people who have elected them into power.

Inspired by the recent election of Mandy Gull as Deputy Grand Chief, *the Nation* spoke to a few female Cree politicians about their experiences and challenges. They include Gull, Youth Grand Chief Kaitlynn Hester, Washaw Sibi Chief Pauline Trapper-Hester and Whapmagoostui Chief Louisa Wynne.

Mandy Gull

Elected Deputy Grand Chief in July in a close race with run-off challenger John Matoush, Gull joked that it is difficult for her to explain what it's like to be a woman in Cree politics because she doesn't know "what it is like to be a man in politics."

"Seriously speaking, it depends on who you're working with – some people are progressive to welcome a women and are ready to work together and some aren't. As long as you do your job well and stand up to the challenges you face as a leader, regardless of sex, you will serve your people well. As a female leader you have to ensure you remain respectful to those who question your ability because of gender – it's up to you to show them otherwise."

When it comes to balancing politics and family life, Gull – the mother of four children who are in their late teens and early 20s – said that having a political career would be difficult if the kids were much younger. Instead, they are

either finishing up high school or have moved out and in college.

"My home-work balance is in tune with their needs as adults. We focus on quality family time and spending time together and eating with one another. We communicate together daily via social media and the phone. My husband and I were young parents so we have a unique and close relationship with our kids," said Gull.

In terms of being a female politician in a male-dominated field, Gull speaks of the importance of having both genders represented.

"As a female leader, women bring an alternative perspective to decision-making. They are a little more in tune with multiple facets of a decision and its impact on social aspects. A male and a female making decisions together in this leadership will be different and an exciting change," said Gull.

Gull emphasized that the educational opportunities now available to Crees made her who she is today and she hopes that others can enjoy a similar experience.

"The access to a post-secondary program changed my life – without it I would not likely be where I am at. Education was stressed as a priority to me as a child and it really was something I valued in achieving – and this is something I stressed to my kids. I enjoy attending graduations and celebrating with the families. This is the message I share at those events," said Gull.



As a female leader, women bring an alternative perspective to decision-making. They are a little more in tune with multiple facets of a decision and its impact on social aspects

- Mandy Gull



Gull buttressed her qualifications by noting that her CV was put online as part of her election campaign. She pointed out however that the Cree Nation Government has no formal qualifications required for its leadership positions.

"This is a major issue because we are electing individuals who are required to disperse and manage major funding, implementation of long-term agreements, and lead a nation. The responsibility of these elected positions is enormous and as we move towards self-government we should start looking at developing some requirements for candidates."

Gull expressed her gratitude for the support she has received from the Cree Nation and for the opportunity to serve.

"I will be spending the first few months of my term learning the files that I will be following up on for the former Deputy Grand Chief," said Gull. I will be focusing on spending time in the communities and listening to their concerns and issues. A large part of my role will be working with the local levels and I'm really looking forward to it."

Kaitlynn Hester

For Youth Grand Chief Kaitlynn Hester, being a woman in Cree politics isn't about gender.

"I am human and I have goals like any other leader does. As a leader, this is new to me. I am willing to learn as I go. I believe I will have the support from our Cree Nation leaders and former leaders," she said.

Hester sees her sex as a non-issue as she is there simply to do the job she was elected to do.

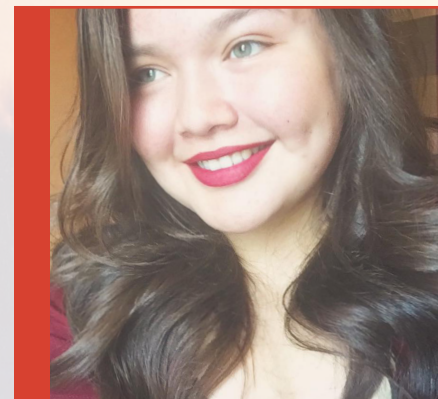
"I just want to focus on my role as the youth leader to guide, direct, initiate and serve our young people. As a young woman, I was raised to respect everyone. I respect all leaders, regardless of their gender or job title," she said.

In terms of being a role model to the youth, Hester took a very humble approach.

"I don't want to be the leader who thinks I am better than everyone else. I am no better than anyone. I can only be better than I was yesterday. I can have 10 goals today, and 20 more tomorrow. As I said, I want to inspire the youth to do more. As a young leader, it is our time. A new leadership is on the rise. I am here for the youth. I want to encourage and support the youth. We are here today and tomorrow," said Hester.

As for her legacy, Hester could only articulate it metaphorically.

"You know how rain drops on the water and makes ripples that keep expanding? It starts with a single rain-drop that makes a small ripple, which



Kaitlynn Hester



Pauline Trapper-Hester

then turns into bigger ones. That's how I want my legacy to be. I want my legacy to be remembered as the young leader who inspired the Cree Nation to aspire, to tell youth not to be afraid of chasing their goals, and to support them, bringing culture and language, connecting youth to our Elders, and to recognize the youth and let them be heard and seen. And to bring anything that our Cree Nation needs," said Hester.

Hester graduated from high school in 2012, and successfully completed a Recreation and Leisure Services program in 2017.

"I have experience and passion in working with the youth. I love learning about our Cree culture. I can speak, read and write in Cree. I've always dreamed of having a young leader in our Cree Nation, and here I am. I never knew I was dreaming about myself all this time. Now that I am here, I want to serve our young people," she said.

"I would like to encourage youth to embrace themselves, chase their goals, fight their challenges and struggles, increase their self-confidence and break their bubble, ignore the negativity, treat others the way you want to be treated, smile, live, laugh and love.

Pauline Trapper-Hester

As Chief of the Washaw Sibi Nation, Trapper-Hester represents people who are still without a proper community but are a Cree community nonetheless.

"At first, I didn't see myself as a 'woman in politics in the Cree Nation' and it was certainly not the reason for me to pursue it. I always believed that

At first, I didn't see myself as a 'woman in politics in the Cree Nation' and it was certainly not the reason for me to pursue it. I always believed that the Washaw Sibi Eeyou are and were entitled to have their own Cree community and by exercising this right, it brought me to where I am now

- Pauline Trapper-Hester

the Washaw Sibi Eeyou are and were entitled to have their own Cree community and by exercising this right, it brought me to where I am now. I've been serving my community members since 2012 and I feel honoured to do so; it is a privilege to work with the Cree Nation as political leadership."

As far as balancing her work-home life, Trapper-Hester's adult children have all left the nest to pursue their goals through post-secondary education.

"I try my very best to attend to their needs and pursue my loving intentions to stay connected with them by visiting with them often and spending quality family time with them. With the technology we have today, we are able to connect more. It can be challenging at times, but we do take the time to debrief our relationships to one another, and make changes if we need to, so that we can continue our attentiveness to one another," said Trapper-Hester.

As for being a woman in Cree politics, Trapper-Hester said she sees it as bringing equality to the position of

leadership and Cree politics. "I am very pleased to be a part of this evolution of our Cree Nation," she said.

Trapper-Hester said she wishes to showcase strength, courage and determination for other aspiring Cree women. "Pursue what you believe in, believe in yourselves, and anything is possible," she said.

Once her time as Chief passes, Trapper-Hester hopes that she will have shown integrity, strength and courage in pursuing the vision of Washaw Sibi Eeyou as a full-fledged Cree community, "where my people will have that sense of belonging, once and for all."

Trapper-Hester has a degree in Business Administration and earlier worked for the Cree School Board and the Washaw Sibi Band Council.

"It started when I was working for the Waskaganish School under the direction of the late Gerti Diamond-Murdoch in 1993. I experienced her leadership qualities and that inspired me to move forward in a leadership role," said Trapper-Hester.



Louisa Wynne

Louisa Wynne

For Whapmagoostui Chief Louisa Wynne, life can be difficult for a quickly growing community that's in the middle of a housing crisis, still isn't hooked up to the broadband network, and is still awaiting the completion of a key greenhouse/biomass project.

Even though she is taking university courses in administration Wynne feels the job is very challenging at times. But she believes the Creator had a hand in getting her where she is today.

"Like everything else in life, politics has its highs and lows," she explained. "Sometimes I lose sleep over difficult decisions that have to be made. I remind myself though that the decisions I make are first and foremost made in the interest of the people I represent.

"One of the highs that makes the loss of sleep worth it is when someone comes up to me and thanks me for the work I've done to help them."

As a mother of two adult daughters (24 and 18), Wynne said she doesn't have to worry about them too much. At the same time, family life isn't easy for Wynne due to the lack of medical services Whapmagoostui.

"I'm married to a man who has been on dialysis for over three years and because of it has to live in another community. I'm also a grandmother to a seven-year-old boy, who's under my care and it's hard on him when I travel. It is hard to balance family and work life but I try to do family-oriented activities whenever the opportunity arises," said Wynne.

One of the highs that makes the loss of sleep worth it is when someone comes up to me and thanks me for the work I've done to help them

- Louisa Wynne

"Initially, it was difficult for us as a family when my husband, as the head of the house, had to be away from us for his illness, especially for our grandson who's very close to his grandfather – in fact, he calls him 'Dad'. When I get overwhelmed I remind myself that everything will pass no matter how difficult the situation may be, and that this is only a four-year term. I'm already in the second year of my mandate and time flies when you're really busy."

In terms of what being a woman brings to the table, Wynne said that in the past the position of Chief had always been a male-dominated one.

"It's fairly recent that women have been elected as chiefs. I notice that now, men are more accepting of female leaders and give us the same regard as our male counterparts," she observed. "However, I think because women are raised differently we're generally more nurturing and companionate leaders – just my opinion, no offense to the men. I also think we're better organised."

Wynne hopes to see more women in politics.

"I believe everybody – male and female – has it in them to do whatever it is they set out to do in life, so I encourage young women to enter politics and I'd like to see more women

as chiefs and in other leadership roles," said Wynne.

Wynne is highly educated. She is currently doing a degree in Administration after completing a certificate in Administration from the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) and holds a certificate from the two-year Executive Program in Office Administration from Canadore College (North Bay) as well as a DEC in Early Childhood Education from Vanier College (Montreal).

Before being elected Chief in March 2016, Wynne had served as Deputy Chief for four years and held numerous administrative positions at the Whapmagoostui Band Office.

After her time in political leadership is done, Wynne said she would like to be remembered as somebody who had made a difference in her community.

"As the first female chief I hope I'm starting a tradition in my community of female leadership. Put simply, I'd like to be seen as a catalyst for change and as a trailblazer for young women and girls in my community. I want them to believe in themselves and that everyone has a gift to share with others. They can achieve whatever they want to in life if you believe in yourself."

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Taapwaauchaayimiisu Believe In Yourself

OUR PROGRAM

Taapwaauyimiisu (*Believe in yourself*) program is a resource available for the schools in the three Cree communities, where the pilot project is currently being launched . We offer support to the students' ages 12 to 17 years old who, for various reasons, are temporarily suspended from 3 to 5 days from school.

The expression ***“Believe in yourself”*** is dear to our program as we want to send a strong message of empowerment and self-worth to our youth.

OUR SERVICE SITES

Taapwaauchaayimiisu program in Mistissini has officially moved in their new service site at the Family Resource Centre (Old Youth Centre). Thank you, Cree Nation of Mistissini, for your collaboration in providing space for our youth.

We would also like to thank everyone that attended our open houses in Waskaganish and Chisasibi.

Should you require more information, please contact the coordinator.

Tel: (819) 527-0407

E-mail: ***Byyourself@cngov.ca***



**Department of
Justice and Correctional Services**



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- Have completed all the requirements of your sentence and probation
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Need Help on How to Apply?

Contact your Local Community Reintegration Officer:

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Mistissini:	418-923-2661
Nemaska:	819-673-2400
Ouje-bougoumou:	418-745-2260
Waskaganish:	819-895-2126
Waswanipi:	819-753-2770
Wemindji:	819-978-3300
Whapmagoostui:	819-929-3796

If you have any additional questions or need more information, please contact the Correctional Services Regional Office in Val-d'Or at 819-874-2600 or by email at justice.valdor@cngov.ca

www.creejustice.ca

An aerial photograph of a coastal community, likely Haida Gwaii, showing several buildings with solar panels installed on their roofs. The community is situated on a peninsula with a rocky shoreline and a small beach. A road runs along the right side of the image, and a body of water is visible on the left. The word "ENERGY" is written in large yellow letters across the top left, and "Alternatives" is written in large white letters across the top right.

ENERGY Alternatives

Photo by Farhan Umedaly

W Dusk brings Indigenous approach to sustainable energy solutions

by Joshua Grant

The name of Indigenous energy group W Dusk was born from an abbreviation of David Isaac's traditional M'ikmaq name, which means "northern lights". It was given to him by his grandfather, also named David Isaac.

The company develops Indigenous community-owned and -operated energy projects that endeavour to work in harmony with nature. They offer renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and hydrokinetic,

and most recently constructed a solar farm in Haida Gwaii, BC. The 100-kilowatt solar system on the Haida Heritage Centre is the largest community-owned project of its kind in Canada.

The W Dusk team's expertise allows them to step in at any point of a community's sustainable-energy project, including project management, planning, infrastructure development or the implementation of new technology.

The ultimate goal is to cultivate local economic growth and foster community initiatives that benefit those involved well into the future. A guiding principle of Indigenous ownership.

"We work throughout Canada, primarily in First Nations communities," Dave Isaac told *the Nation*. "We're essentially community energy developers."

"We take on projects from onset to implementation but

what's different about us is that we have an inverse model compared to our competitors. Our ethos is to be community owned – we think about the community first, before profits.”

While most in the energy industry are primarily concerned with the bottom line, W Dusk is focused on developing lasting solutions that power the communities they serve not only with electricity, but also with a sense of pride, identity and sovereignty.

“We have community planners as well,” Isaac continued. “It’s a very long-term approach to real community development. We lead with renewables but then we get involved with other things like food systems and housing. Again, as much as we’re an energy developer, we’re also a community developer.”

With plenty of small-to large-scale projects already on the go, W Dusk Energy hopes to expand internationally. They want to spread the idea that the built environment and physical infrastructure of one’s home “should reflect the Indigenous values, culture and natural beauty of community.”

W Dusk’s vision of sustainable energy is slowly taking root across the country.

Isaac says the Haida Heritage Centre project is a mix of modern and traditional. “There



Photos by Josie Seung Min Baik

are carved poles and [the solar features] are built like longhouses. The aesthetic is quite breathtaking; the application of a modern Indigenous-built environment is inspiring.”

The company also built a small ground mount system with community youth. “We call it ‘soul art’, that’s what we do in every community we work with,” Isaac explained. “Obviously we can’t send the youth up 30 feet in the air, so we helped them build art installations also inspired by the longhouse, using local resources.”

Isaac incorporates the natural environment around the project to help create the cultural aesthetic. “For our last project we harvested old-growth cedar and milled it ourselves, with a Haida architect. What we built was inspired by what a longhouse would look like after a century of serving the community. We built these art pieces with the local youth, covered them in solar panels and created this solid structure. They’re art installations that power the community.”

At the end of the day, Isaac says he hopes that W Dusk’s work will remind people that there are environmentally friendly alternatives to big energy that can not only provide power, but also be a source of inspiration.

“We want people to see it every day,” he concluded. “They need to see it and be proud of it.”

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Hockey fanatics explained

by Errol Mianscum

Hockey fans have been dormant through the summer months, patiently waiting for the first sign of action on the ice.

Every die-hard fan eagerly speculates which new or familiar player will be on their team. The rookies, the free-agent signings, the grinders and muckers and your franchise players. How are we looking this year? Always hopeful! Let's see if we can best describe some typical fanatics out there.

First, we have the type who was born into a team. They were raised knowing who they will cheer for. The father usually ensures that their child will make the "right choice." These fans are pretty good magicians as well, disappearing when their team gets knocked out of the postseason. The typical term for this species is "Habs fan". They do have the right to brag that their team has won the most Stanley Cups. At 24 championships, it's a number that will not likely be reached by another team in our lifetime – even if it may be decades before they win #25.

We have the "hopeless fans". These fans cheer for a team that has never won a championship, at least not in their lifetime. They always "believe" that one day they will win. There are

several teams like this, but typically we call these people "Leafs fans".

We also have the "bandwagon fans," those who easily give up on their chosen teams and claim they've been cheering for the Cup-winning team since birth. We can also call these "ex-Leaf or Sens fans"! Can't blame them.

Then we have the "angry fan," who will fight – usually on social media, sometimes in person – to defend his or her team. This creature believes their team is the toughest in the league. This most often applies to Bruins fans (and yes, I am a Bruins fan and I have participated in anger-management therapy).

Of course, we have the "new fans". They are mostly younger folk who cheer for the team of recently drafted, highly touted, highly ranked players. They know the statistics of almost every star player in major junior hockey.

But none of these fans will ever compare to the Blackhawks fan, the ultimate die-hard. One Hawks fan I know never failed to believe, year after year, that his team would win the Cup. "This is the year," he would say every October.

Then, one season, his "hope" reached a boiling point. Dressed in

his usual top-to-bottom Blackhawks attire, he was watching his team face elimination in the playoffs. By the end of the night, he was again disappointed. Frustrated, he ripped every piece of clothing off his body, grabbed everything in his house that resembled a Hawks logo, threw it all in the fireplace and burned it all!

His wife came downstairs to see what was going on and could not believe her husband was standing there in his "birthday suit" watching the flames. Only the true fan will understand the madness behind this.

Then, his Blackhawks bling depleted, and his hopes exhausted, this fan would watch his team win three Stanley Cup championships in the space of only six years – 2010, 2013 and 2015. It was the ultimate sacrifice, and perhaps the hockey gods were listening.

Fans make hockey what it is, a passion. Each fan cannot be duplicated; we are all unique. We are so passionate that best friends won't talk during the playoffs. Birds will be flipped. Wives will tip-toe around the house during the game. Once the smoke settles and a winner emerges, we all come out of our caves and reacquaint ourselves with reality and catch up with friends and family.



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In another **time and place**

by Xavier Kataquapit



As I get older, I start to understand what my parents felt with the passage of time. As a teenager, I often noticed my mom Susan and dad Marius become more contemplative as they aged. They would pause and stare off into the horizon. They were probably remembering, imagining, wondering about people, family and friends who they had outlived.

Mom would confide in me about her Kookoom (grandmother) Maggie Paulmartin. She told me how so full of wisdom and knowledge her Kookoom had been, recalling many of the ancient stories about our people that came from her granny. As we worked in the kitchen, where she taught all of her children how to cook and a strong work ethic, she would smile when she recalled the silly things she and her siblings did as children living in the wilderness. She would also recall the darker times of life on the land. Her uncle Matthew died as a child after consuming poison herbs. There was also the anguish of witnessing her Aunt Mary Rose lose the use of her legs due to polio.

Sometimes, as I worked with dad on a construction project, he would stop for a break and reminisce about performing the same tasks with family and friends who had passed away. Other times, when we stopped to rest

from travelling on the land, dad would look into the familiar wilderness and remember when his father showed him a trail ahead. It seemed as though he was seeing the ghosts of those who had gone before him. Stories would flow as he described these people trapped in time and laughed at his nostalgic recollections. He would become quiet and sad when reminded of how difficult life could be, how little everyone had, and how hungry people were in times of famine.

There is both good and the bad in growing up in a small, remote community where everyone was close and depended on each other to survive. People drew on their large families for support.

There is a great feeling of community when you have so many people to call your own but it comes with the high price of being connected to so much tragedy and misfortune. I have seen my fair share of tragedies in my large extended family of relatives and friends.

I fondly remember Cassandra and David, who I saw every day one sum-

I understand now those long pauses my mom and dad took in their day, when they stared into space.

mer long ago. They were the children of my cousin Maria and her husband Joseph. I walked by their house on my way to work at the Northern Store when I was a teenager. It became a habit to buy some chocolate bars, chips and pop on my way home and hand them off to these smiling kids. It felt good to be able to brighten up their day.

At the store, I was employed with several of my Kataquapit cousins. I worked closely with Ernie and George Kataquapit. Ernie was slightly older than me and was like an older brother. George was much older with a family of his own and was more of a fatherly figure due to his knowledge and experience. We all looked up to him. George was also very kind and fun to be around. Ernie, George and I had a running joke between us. Since I was the youngest, they often passed down menial jobs to me with the excuse – “Kee-tee-k Oh-kee-mow” – that translates as, “because the boss said so.” When I felt rebellious, I would saddle them with silly tasks and repeat their words – “Kee-tee-k Oh-kee-mow”, which they agreed to with a laugh.

Little David who enjoyed my treats and George are both gone now, lost too early before their time. On quiet summer afternoons, I sometimes find myself thinking about David on his front step waiting for his chocolate bar or the big smile George gave us as we stood outside the store on our breaks. I understand now those long pauses my mom and dad took in their day, when they stared into space. They were simply remembering people they loved in another time and place.

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ECN-CNG to CRTC Phone Hearing

Give Subsidy Directly to Consumers

Ottawa: CRTC high-cost subsidies were intended to insure remote areas get phone service.

CRTC policy in the past has been based on telcos passing the funds along. According to their latest deposition to the CRTC, Télébec expects their 2017 Band G subsidy to be \$1.8 million.

ECN and CNG asked the CRTC to send those funds directly to customers. "If a better service comes along, people should be free to get their best value."

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